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CHAPTER I

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR VILLAGE

000 WINTER had begun. The first snow of the year had fallen. It covered the muddy streets of the village, softening the nakedness of the fruit trees which stood lonely in the bare yards. The wind from Mount Vitosha came whistling down the empty lanes, sending both man and beast to seek protection and warmth. The animals huddled in their thatched folds and shelters; the women and children crowded on the little stools near the fireplace at home. The fall sowing of wheat was in. The fields, wind-swept and snow-laden, were deserted, seemingly forgotten by the men and women who had spent so much time with them during the past months.

512 231 One ordinary day followed another. Every morning the water buffalo had to be groomed until they shone; the oxen had to be cleaned after the night in the dirty stall; these, as well as the sheep, had to be fed. Usually the animals received their meager rations before ten [291] o'clock. Shortly thereafter the men, wearing their dirty-gray sheepskin coats, their brimless lambskin hats, and their pigskin sandals, congregated at the taverns to relieve the monotony of their daily routine. At noon they plodded home to a lunch of beans, looked after the cattle once more, and gave commands to their womenfolk. The rest of the day was spent at the taverns in drinking and talking, interspersed with long, easy silences. After the evening meal, the cattle were fed again. Then the men dropped off to sleep along with the rest of the household.

181 ● 829 The winds and enforced idleness of winter were not alone responsible for the apparent sluggishness on every hand. Slow motion was characteristic of Dragalevtsy life in general, but especially of the bodily movements of the people. *Ima vreme* (there's ~~plenty~~ of time) was either a practical philosophical tenet which explained their lack of hurry or else it was an expression frequently used to rationalize their casual manner. I never saw a peasant with a watch.

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veniently arranged to be away from home. The villagers occasionally joked about the peasant who climbed a tree to escape the tax collector and had to remain in that uncomfortable predicament for many hours before the visitor left. But the Turks did recognize the traditional form of village government, or government by elders, and let the heads of the zadrugas, or large joint families, run village affairs to their liking. Most of the time, the head of the zadruga had to accept the responsibility for the deeds of all members of his family group.

These zadrugas were little principalities guided by a *stopanin,* usually the oldest male. His word was law; he distributed the work among the men, bought the necessities, sold the produce, and represented the zadruga before the outside world; therefore, the zadruga usually bore his name. Whenever a son, brother, or nephew of the *stopanin* married, he brought his wife back home to become a member of his zadruga. The wife of the *stopanin,* known as the *domakinya,* managed the housework. She kept the women busy making bread, cooking, washing, spinning, and weaving. Everything was owned in common. Work too was done in common, and whatever one earned outside was turned over to the *stopanin* for the common treasury. In return, all the members got clothes and food, which in those days were about all they expected to have.

After the death of the *stopanin,* the members met to select the next most capable male as their leader. At times, the *domakinya* took over the position of responsibility. Such was doubtless what happened in the case of Baba Dragana, or her prototype, since the ending of the word Dragalevtsy would indicate that it had been settled by a zadruga. The old joint family comprised married cousins descended from the same ancestor, with the result that it sometimes numbered as many as one hundred people.

When the older Dragalevtsy peasants talked to me of the zadruga, which persisted as late as 1880 in their village, they showed that wistfulness for the past which runs through the works of many Bulgarian writers. The zadruga was supposed to be a source of plenty and happiness to its members. One aged peasant listed for me the advantages of this joint family over the modern family. First of all, he said, it had great economy. The members had only one lamp,

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596 178 829 one stove, and one of everything, but now the same number of people living separately require many of each thing. In the second place, there was obedience. The young people respected the old. This made for efficiency, since the *stopanin* was like "a general in the army, directing the young." Finally, he concluded, all the people worked together and could earn more, thus becoming richer.

596 178 Even under the Turks the zadruga was passing from the scene because it was too unwieldy to adjust to the economic and social changes taking place. Contributing to its decline was the spirit of independence which stemmed from the French Revolution and eventually reached the Balkans. Greeks, and then Serbs, drove the Turks from their midst and established national independence. In Bulgaria and Macedonia, still under the Turks, the *haidutsi,* or guerrillas, went to the mountains every spring on Annunciation Day to spend the summer warring against their Mohammedan masters. It was this same tradition which the Yugoslav guerrillas followed in their resistance to the Nazis. This spirit of independence and the other influences from the West led one zadruga member after another to ask for a division of the common property. Usually the older men, brothers or cousins to each other, secured their shares and then established semi-patriarchal families of their own which consisted of their own sons and their sons' families. What had been common land now became the property of the individual families living in dwellings of their own. But more important sociologically than the smaller size of the individual family unit was the changed basis of authority in the family circle.

In the zadruga the head had been an overseer who achieved his position on the basis of age, ability, and special influence in the community at large. He constantly had to exercise care to keep in the good graces of the zadruga members upon whose assent his office was dependent. In this way the patriarchal pattern, although it ran through the zadruga system, was tempered by the control vested in an elected as opposed to an hereditary head. The father of an individual family, on the other hand, felt that his right of dominance was God-given. He, allied with God, invested himself with the lordship and so held his own in spite of personal unworthiness and in spite of dissension and revolt of the subject children. The father was

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intelligentsia, when it came to the point dared not run counter to the old village sanctions against divorce. 586

More often it was the husband who left the home. When he did and in rare cases interested himself in another woman, the villagers did all in their power to make him return. If he refused at first, they made him feel the indignation of public opinion, treating him as an outcast and sometimes going to the length of beating him. If he remained in the village, he had no choice but to go back to his wife. During the time he was away his wife also was put to shame, getting little sympathy from the general public. She knew, furthermore, that in case of a divorce both parties would be held guilty by the villagers, so she was willing to take her husband back and get along with him as best she could. A divorced man was considered to have loose morals; a divorced woman would have been thought thoroughly bad. There was thus a situation in which everyone was expected to marry, with no sanctioned way out once the marriage contract had been entered upon. Though such an attitude meant that unfortunate marriages had to drag on interminably, it also had the effect of forcing couples to adjust themselves to each other. [208] [558]

Dragalevtsy seemed a curiosity indeed: a village in which marriage was little questioned, where there was practically no marital unfaithfulness, and no divorce. What were the reasons for the family stability? For one thing, life was still lived according to ancient customs. People only recently had begun to wonder about the age-old patterns which they had been following so faithfully. Some writers would call them the "dead hand of the past," others "the cake of custom." Whatever their name, they were conducive to a common understanding of the place of marriage. All the people expected the same things from life and from the home. 581 593 181 829

Then, too, earning their living by farming was a joint enterprise. People got used to putting their shoulders to the wheel as a family group. In addition to what they all did together, women were supposed to do certain things, men other things, and children still other things. As long as every person did his part there was no friction, but quiet efficiency. Furthermore, the presence of a number of relatives made for greater stability. In the case of apparent misunderstanding

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between a husband and wife, the proper relative intervened to suggest a way out. Most of the husband's relatives were in the same locality with him and could keep an eye on his behavior.

One was not only tied closely to the husband's blood kin *(rodstvo)* but had to enter upon a formal relationship with one's in-laws. Families related by marriage felt close to each other, the intensity of the feeling depending upon the frequency with which the families met and the way the young couples got along. Ordinarily, however, the family of the bride was considered by the husband's parents to be as close, at times even closer, than blood relatives. For instance, if there was any sort of celebration to which guests were invited, the family of the bride was the first to be asked. One reliable informant estimated that ninety out of one hundred people in Dragalevtsy felt the force of *svatovstvo,* or this relationship springing up through intermarriage. The young people, who are usually so prone to make a break with the past, maintained it in all its vigor. Here was the way one young man explained the *svatovstvo:*

"If my sister married some man in Simeonovo, even though I had never seen him before, his brother and sister would be my *svati,* and if I met them we would feel like cousins. I would never curse them or quarrel with them and would call their father *'dedo'* and their mother *'baba,'* the same names I use for my own grandparents. My parents and the parents of my new brother-in-law would likewise be *svati* and would treat one another reverently." Two brothers could not marry two sisters from another family, though there was no blood relationship, because the second couple were *svati* after the first couple married, and *svati* could not marry. Two brothers could marry two first cousins, but not two sisters. This feeling of closeness in families related by marriage did not stop with the husband and the wife, nor with the single in-law gained by each family. It included, as well, the in-law's parents and brothers and sisters with whom just dealings and proper behavior had always to prevail.

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More than anything else, however, the shared activities of husband and wife developed an understanding which lasted through thick and thin. Some of these shared activities were the trip to market, the

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CHAPTER VIII

FAMILISM, A CHANGING WAY OF LIFE

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THE DAY at last arrived when I could anticipate the peasants' answers to most of the questions that I asked them. When I inquired what they would do if they had five hundred dollars to spend, I could list in advance the items they would name. The older people, especially, thought and acted largely in terms of the Dragalevtsy of the "good old days," when life was lived in a *familistic* way because the family played the major role in the community. When I understood the characteristics of familism, as a result of observing and reading about peasant life in other parts of the world, the many interesting but isolated facts I had noticed in Dragalevtsy began to make sense and to form a pattern. In a familistic society, whether it is in the Balkans or China, life is largely customary and traditional. Individualism is discouraged because of the crises that the unusual person creates in the daily routine. People prefer a dead uniformity, or a leveling of the best toward the mediocre. The family plays the leading part in this task of molding an individual into the accepted pattern. From childhood to old age the kinship group brings pressure to bear upon any nonconformist, since the family as a whole loses prestige in the community if a member gets out of hand. The family, too, is the chief training ground for the young, and parents cannot blithely transfer any responsibility of this sort to an outside agency such as the school or the church. Village opinion holds the parents accountable.

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Furthermore, economic life is centered about the family. Since family members grow or make for themselves most of the things they need, they depend only to a minor degree upon stores, factories, and other commercial agencies. The family is the productive, distributive, and consumptive unit. This is one reason why village families can weather so many wars and so many depressions: they can satisfy most of their immediate wants at home.

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Visitors suddenly confronted with the familistic way of life for the first time are often shocked at the low level of living which they observe: animals sharing the same dwelling; monotonous diet and low health standards; waste of time and energy with inefficient tools and methods. Before the peasant is condemned as unambitious, indolent, or stupid, there are a few things the outsider must bear in mind. In agricultural villages throughout the world the land base has been shrinking while the population has been expanding. This has meant decreased economic opportunity. Farms which were once adequate are now divided up strip by strip and handed over to many descendants, with the results that the term "eking out a living" has come to have real meaning for the peasant. The outsider often forgets that the rise in the level of living in the cities through the techniques of mass production and mass distribution has been relatively recent and phenomenally rapid. The villager is not really so far behind the times if one compares his life with that of many cities a few decades ago, or with the blighted areas of these same cities today. But one cannot deny that quite a few peasants seem to take pride in resisting social change; they are slow to experiment with new methods, and they assume that what was good enough for their fathers is good enough for them. This resistance is based, to a great degree, upon the realization that accepting too much from outside will seriously affect the social organization of their community. Urban society is not nearly so close-knit and can allow for contradictions and inconsistencies on a much broader scale than in the village, where life is still intimate and face-to-face. Gorievtsy people, for example, in 1937 were conscious of the far-reaching changes brought about by the abandonment of sheep raising in favor of dairying. Sometime ago, a number of the peasants actively resisted this economic trend. In the opinion of many, these conservatives were stupid; at the same time they were bright enough to figure out that changes would result in the economy to which they were accustomed. Because they were accustomed to it, they wanted to preserve it.

In a familistic society religion has usually become rigidly institutionalized and is closely allied with the family. All family events call for the blessing of the religious intermediary; there are usually household shrines; there is considerable emphasis upon observing the

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181 ● 829 596 forms of the religion; and usually the prevailing religion has a monopoly in its field. Where there once existed two or three competing religions, the peasants now have a syncretistic set of beliefs that almost all of the people accept.

[168] The population in a familistic society tends to be stable. The folk legends and religious beliefs stress the importance of remaining at home. Permanence becomes a virtue, for travel outside introduces too much novelty. Separation places a strain upon the family relationships, which must be kept at full vigor in the interest of community self-preservation.

[517] Recreation is personalized instead of being commercialized. Peasants, as far as possible, spend their leisure hours in the company of others, to say nothing of the many hours women spend working with each other within a family or neighborhood circle. Just as the villagers have ceremonial ways of doing many things, they also have formal ways, or proverbs, of saying many things. This we saw earlier in the description of the *Sedenki*. Proverbs reinforce those beliefs that help maintain the familistic society, and serve as convenient means of self-expression. At the same time they are standards of behavior.

[212] Because recreation and economic life are personal, the familistic society has little need for much reading and writing. The priest, the middlemen, the taxgatherers, and a few others who early associated themselves with the village economy needed to "figure," but the rest of the people had little concern with that.

In most family-dominated societies, life is man-centered. In some areas this arrangement is related to religious beliefs; in others, it is related to the economic organization of the family in which somebody has to give orders necessary to the carrying out of the daily activities. A recognized head, conscious of his own importance, acts authoritatively in directing his family group.

The local government is traditionally managed by elders, who represent families rather than political parties or individuals. The village elders make their decisions from the standpoint of what is good for the village as a whole in the light of precedents rather than from a narrow legalism. The religious writings or sacred legends are conveniently cited to justify the actions they take. Such govern-

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mental activity exists primarily to meet crisis situations and to keep the established ways of life moving smoothly. The giving of relief, the provision of education, healing of the sick, insurance of cattle and crops are all left to the family rather than to the government.

It is quite possible for several societies to use the familistic approach, in the sense that the family is the dominant institution, and still differ as to the relative importance of many community values. Most of them would probably respect the heritage from the past, but even here there would be variations. As far as Dragalevtsy was concerned, the chief values or virtues were land ownership, hard work, frugality, premarital chastity, observance of some of the more important religious rites, and being a good neighbor. In connection with the last, the villagers said, "God help those with bad neighbors" and "Without good neighbors life couldn't go on."

The Dragalevtsy people, although their underlying organization and philosophy was primarily familistic, had adjusted themselves to a number of modern ways. Some ways persisted because they fitted in with the established customs, and others because they were kept in vogue by force or by the authority of the mayor.

Commerce, as represented by about ten merchant groups, had become established in the village because it was conducted essentially as a family enterprise. From time to time a local man sold some of his land and started in business for himself. He always employed members of his family rather than outsiders, because he trusted his own. If he needed extra help and had an unmarried son, the normal thing was to urge matrimony. He carried over into his business the same idea of division of labor which prevailed at home and in the field. The men ordered the goods, settled the accounts, sold the liquor in the taverns. The women acted as cooks or clerks. Some of the wives who helped keep the store could not read, write, add, or subtract and had to give whole measurements or else depend upon the customer to hand them the right amount for fractions. A husband explained when I discussed the matter with him, "It is better to lose money through error than through dishonesty." Both men and women co-operated in keeping the place clean. Here the man made a concession which he would seldom have made in the home.

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529 of view, its members got little encouragement from the older people
575 and had little lasting enthusiasm for its program.

575 The Reading Room Association *(Chitalishte)* was organized
829 locally on February 10, 1921, upon the initiative of men who had been outside the village and had returned with the desire to raise the cultural level. From its founding, however, it concerned itself more with financial than with cultural problems. In the words of the constitution, the purposes of the organization were:

A. to influence the people of the village, especially the young to self-improvement.

B. to cause to grow among the people a feeling for public unity in life and for intelligent usage of the village domain.

C. to cultivate love towards the fatherland and towards the good and morally edifying elements of the national literature.

The *Chitalishte* planned to achieve its purpose by opening a public reading room free for all inhabitants and visitors and supplying the room with suitable books. The *Chitalishte* group also planned to organize evening lectures and other public performances and entertainments "in order to create a patriotic feeling and appreciation of the nation's past."

The first act of the newly organized society was to buy a large sign inscribed with the name of the organization. After that the officers spent money for chairs, lamps, benches, bookcases, stovepipes, and tables, while individuals donated inkstands, water jugs, a box for gathering money, and a picture of the Madonna. Unfortunately this left practically no money for any form of reading matter. The expense of having a share in the construction of the *Obshtina* building further drained the financial resources of the organization. It was also a factor in keeping away prospective members who preferred to wait until the building was paid for before they joined. In 1937 twenty-two people, most of them charter members, were looked upon as active supporters of the work of the *Chitalishte*.

Most of the members were critical of the present officers, and recognized that the organization's activities were at a standstill. When members were asked to tell how they would improve matters if elected

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to a position of importance they answered: "We should choose a new executive committee, put the library in order, lend out the books, have more evening entertainments. To do this we should get in touch with people in Sofia."

Part of the trouble arose from disagreement among the officers. In the words of one member, "An organization cannot get ahead with that sort of business." But even more of the trouble went back to the fact that the organizers had not convinced the villagers of the importance of the group. Meanwhile, most peasants looked upon it as an importation of interest only to the intelligentsia and their hangers-on.

The experiences of the *Chitalishte* and other organizations in Dragalevtsy revealed that the peasants were not organization-minded. Even if we included the governmental groups to be discussed in the next chapter, we would find that less than ten women in the village belonged to any formal group, and only 107 of the 510 men over twenty years of age had an organizational membership. Where people's homes were so conveniently located one would expect greater participation on the part of the men, at least. But almost four-fifths of them avoided any organizational affiliation, largely because they were not accustomed to using an organization to do what they thought needed to be done. One of the most frequent reasons for failure to join was this: "Why should I pay the fees charged when I would get nothing in return?"

In this world of competing *isms* Dragalevtsy represented in 1937 a modification of familism, the oldest and most widespread way of life we know, perpetuated by agricultural villages all over the world. But familism was slowly losing out. In some quarters of the world the commercialism of a capitalistic system was supplanting the older values with money values; in other quarters the collectivism of a communist society was shaking the economic foundations of the large family group.

As far as Dragalevtsy was concerned, commercialism was in its infancy. Back in 1937 communism might have seemed to the outsider to have a hold on this village as well as on others in Bulgaria

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But some of the peasants who turned Communists were having their days of religious doubt. They asked quite frequently, "Can we be Communists and still believe in God?" They voluntarily sent their children to the priest's class in religion held in the schoolhouse. "And the Communist children know their lessons better than the children of the opposition," was the opinion of a member of the intelligentsia.

The ideas of many new converts to the Marxist doctrine had been rudely shaken the previous summer at the time of the church processional for rain. The drought had been devastating. Corn was drying up; pastures were turning brown. So a band of villagers, with some Communists who went along for old times' sake, accompanied the priest on a circuit of the fields. The boys carried the church relics and the priest walked faithfully along in his hot, black vestments. No rain came and the Communists thoroughly enjoyed scoffing at those who had started out with such bright hopes. Conditions grew worse and worse, so the religious leaders thought another processional in order. The whole performance was repeated, with Communists along again. This time the priest went up high on the mountainside, so as to include village properties not previously visited. His prayers were efficacious, for a shower which later turned to steady rain burst forth upon the band of villagers, wetting them to the skin before they could return to shelter in the village. The religious people thus had the last word when atheism was discussed.

The prevalent feeling of insecurity included more, however, than beliefs and basic attitudes about religion and politics. It stemmed also from the economic uncertainty which characterized the period. Always lurking in the peasant's consciousness was the fear that his holding, his precious acres, would be collectivized as was done in Russia. It mattered not to him that his farming was inefficiently done or that such inefficiency was no solution for the overpopulation which characterized his land. He wanted no part of a great impersonal *kolkhoz* where in the long run he would become a worker instead of an owner, or where he would work land which he could not call his own. That to him was serfdom; it was not freedom. And discussions of these topics trailed off into many beside-the-point objections, which

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668 nevertheless seemed important to the peasant. I recall one such
178 discussion which dealt with the idea of a shortened work-week at the
626 factories. The peasants disapproved of the whole plan and used it
423 as a basis for condemning land collectivization because "We want to
829 be able to work as long as we want without having people tell us that we have to stop working."

Peasants were greatly confused, therefore, over the farm policies to be pursued in the next two or three years. They planned and schemed and talked endlessly about what they should plant, what they should do about their debts, or whether the aged fathers should distribute their land to their sons before they died. But always there was the great unknown of government policy which upset their calculations and kept them insecure.

668 Another important social change was occuring in the institutional
178 pattern of Dragalevtsy. In earlier chapters we noted how the en-
596 croachment of the state was making considerable impact upon the traditional familistic patterns, while economic life was becoming more commercialized and religious activities were declining in importance. The coming of the Communists had begun to weaken the family ties even further, for the Fatherland Front had given votes to all women and had thus attacked the dogma of male supremacy; it had honored the young at the expense of the aged; and it had turned brother against brother as the struggle for control grew more bitter. As the representative of the central government, the Fatherland Front was affecting an even larger area of life than the prewar regime did, especially when its economic regulations and its threat to the hallowed traditional system of landownership.

668 Another disturbing effect was the substitution of Moscow as
771 the center of the universe, for the Communist adherents at least, when
178 formerly Dragalevtsy or perhaps Sofia by courtesy was thought to be
829 the center. These innovations of the present government had done much to prejudice it in the eyes of the people, who made decisions not upon the basic issues which the government was striving to champion, but resisted blindly and perhaps fanatically simply because the new regime spelled the end of their way of life. As they realized this, some of the peasants turned more and more to the church, the institu-

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tion which had kept Bulgarian nationality alive through the centuries and had become the champion of an independent Bulgaria in days gone by. In Dragalevtsy church attendance had increased and more attention was paid to the forms and ceremonies, although fasting was not gaining any in popularity. Nor were the peasants too trustful of Archbishop Stefan, the politically minded head of their church. But they knew that the church and the family served as mutual supports and that if one suffered the other suffered too. Government which was once tolerated as a necessary evil now had become an active menace to be combated whenever possible. The means of struggling against the government were inadequate, but the peasants had patience and said that they would bide their time. But as they bided their time many of them died and were replaced by men and women who had grown up under the tutelage of the Fatherland Front, who had forgotten about the days of village elders, of large family groups, and no longer reverenced out-of-date superstitions or valued quaintness in contrast to that which was modern.

A new Dragalevtsy was thus being born. Change was nothing new to the village, but this time changes were occurring so fast that the old way of life could no longer absorb the impact of strange traits and differing social values. The transition period was proving painful for those who still wanted to live in the past. Whether it held promise for those gazing toward the future depended upon the decisions or indecisions of men sitting around conference tables in countries thousands of miles away.

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with a relationship as deep-rooted as that of the Balkan peasant to his land, he is also creating the seeds out of which a spontaneous resistance movement could grow. There is little evidence of collectivization at present, but the peasants are not convinced that it is not just around the corner.

Then too, the Balkan peasants, especially in the settled agricultural areas, have not taken kindly to Communism because they characterize it as an urban movement. When seasoned Communists try to converse with peasants about the merits of the Russian system their factory-oriented dialectic falls flat. Nor have they developed an agricultural vocabulary with which to communicate intelligibly with the rural people. The more the Balkan Communists talk, the more the peasants are convinced of the urban orientation of the new government. They consider it anti-Agrarian and anti-peasant. In an attempt to overcome this reserve to their program the Communists organize deputation teams of artisans who spend Sundays out in carefully selected villages helping the peasants repair their wagons, mend their pots and pans, or they even bring along a corps of barbers to cut the villagers' hair. The spirit behind such a move is to have the artisans show by their deeds, "You see, we are your friends. We're all brother Bulgarians [or Yugoslavs, as the case may be]." But it takes more than this to sell such a radical program as Communism to the capitalistic-minded peasant.

The rural villagers elsewhere in the Balkans, as well as in Dragalevtsy, resent the term worker. Newspapers studiously attempt to get the worker ideology accepted by the rural citizens, but the social statuses of the peasant and the worker are such that the government is asking the former to step down a rung, in the peasant's estimation. So Communism is thought to represent a backward rather than a forward move, and is related to the all-important matter of land: the peasant generally possesses it, whereas the worker is usually landless.

Many analyses of the Balkan problems play up rightly the role of the church, whether it be Eastern Orthodox or Roman Catholic, in the peasants' lack of enthusiasm for Communism. Others stress the generations-old nationality antipathies which have some influence. Certainly Pan-Slavism is not paying high dividends in rural areas in

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The Communist experiment with Bulgaria is now ten years old. The evidence at hand is deemed more than sufficient for substantiating a case, with particular regard to labor law and relations.

In analyzing our primary source of evidence—Bulgaria's labor legislation—a sequence of important premises should be constantly borne in mind. The Bulgarian Communist Party, which is the one and only element of power, has fully subscribed to the theory and practice of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It has termed its form of government a "people's democracy" which "fulfills the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat."[5] According to Lenin, the dictatorship of the proletariat represents "a power limited by nothing, by no law, directly based on violence."[6] It is, therefore, difficult, if at all possible, to take even Communist legislation at its face value, when it is known that the law is not binding on the highest repository of power—the Communist Party and government. Still, the existing legislation can be safely considered as the expression of a "minimum of violence" (the way toward the maximum being left open) and, as such, will necessarily reflect the guiding principles of Bulgarian labor law and relations.

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Another important premise is the Communist identification of party and government with the "working class" and the establishment of government ownership over capital and means of production. From labor's point of view, this situation means that in practice the workers are employees of a single owner—the Communist government—yet in theory are owners of their place of work and employers of themselves. This obvious nonsense has a definite purpose: to make impossible any "contrast" between capital and labor and, thus, to place the whole labor force under absolute governmental control. That is why "strike" is an unknown term in Communist labor law (you cannot strike against yourself), its equivalent having been identified as a capital

(Footnote 4 continued)
insufficiently clarified. For details, see Michael Padev, *Dimitrov Wastes No Bullets* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1948), Ch. VI; William B. King and Frank O'Brien, *The Balkans* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), pp. 157-159; and author's study cited at footnote 3, pp. 11-14.

[5] Georgi Dimitrov, *Political Report to the 5th Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party* (Sofia, 1949), in Bulgarian, p. 123.

[6] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow: 1930), Vol. 9, Second Russian Edition, p. 95, in Russian.

[7] Constitution of the People's Republic of Bulgaria of 1947, full English translation in Andrew Gyorgy, *Governments of Danubian Europe* (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1949), Appendix, pp. 323-339.

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crime against the state and put within the proscription of Communist criminal law. Any transgression on the part of a worker is, therefore, a direct offense against the state authority. It is easily understandable why Communist criminal law has engulfed the great part of matters which usually pertain to labor legislation, and why even the latter is punitive rather than protective in character.

The basic legal documents related to labor law and relations in Communist Bulgaria are the constitution,[7] the Code of Labor[8] and the Statute of the Trade Unions.[9] They, of course, are supplemented by various acts which, according to the Communist doctrine of "normative acts,"[10] can and do supersede previous legislation, no matter what governmental body originated them.

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According to the constitution, labor, besides being "a right," is "a duty and a point of honor for every able-bodied citizen. It is the duty of every citizen to engage in socially useful labor and to work according to his powers and ability."[11] Of course, it is the government which enforces the observance of this constitutional norm and establishes the "social utility" of the work done. In practice, "the duty to work" is exemplified in the complete regimentation of Bulgaria's labor force.

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Two governmental agencies, the Office of Labor Cadres and the Main Board of Labor Reserves, are especially entrusted with the registration, distribution, recruitment and complete control of all available manpower from 14 years of age upward. Their basic tasks are, in Communist language, "to register the available labor force by finding and keeping at hand, through registration, all employed and unemployed workers; to find them appropriate jobs and, with respect to the fulfillment of the Five-Year Economic Plan, to meet the needs of the industrial, constructional, and other enterprises by guaranteeing to them the necessary manpower . . . . Workers who leave their jobs arbitrarily and without excusable

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[7] *Izvestiya na Presidiuma na Narodnoto Sobranje*, Year II, No. 91, November 13, 1951, in Bulgarian.

[8] *Ustav na Professionalnite Suyuzi v Narodnata Republica Bulgaria* (Statute of the Trade Unions in the People's Republic Bulgaria), approved by the Third Congress of the Bulgarian trade unions, December, 1951 (Sofia: *Profizdat*, 1952), in Bulgarian.

[9] In Communist jurisprudence, any act of a central governmental authority prevails upon preceding legislation, without distinction of formal superiority. The "doctrine of normative acts" is summarized in United States Department of Labor bulletin cited at footnote 1, pp. 5 and 6.

[10] Art. 73.

538 his victims and was not merely venting his own embitterment.

The work of another author of the nineties had this beneficial effect on Bulgarian social life. It was the work of a master of social and political satire like Mikhaylovski but much milder, more enlightened, more loving than he. This book which with Vazov's novel "Under the Yoke" is one of the most popular in Bulgaria, comes from the pen of Aleko Konstantinov (1863-1897) and is a cross between a chronicle and a novel; it consists of a series of loosely connected episodes from the life of one person Bay-Ganyu (the title of the book), who typifies the middle-class Bulgarian as he was in the first years after the liberation: clever, suspicious, but bold and self-reliant, not too cultured, not too able but yet rather clever in solving problems in which he seeks too much for subtlety, energetic, obstinately firm and in the depths of his soul not bitter, not spoiled, able to reform. [829] The value of the satire of Aleko Konstantinov, which is filled with humor, lies in the faith that Bay-Ganyu, the ordinary Bulgarian can change, that the evils from which he suffers are only temporary, that they are a result of the bad influences resulting from the Turkish yoke. These people deserve to be rebuked, but should be ridiculed rather than condemned irrevocably. Thus Aleko Konstantinov saves his victims, for his laughter is not cruel and does not slay completely. The book is salutary and gives a true picture of Bulgarian life in the epoch which it describes, much truer than the bitter satires of Mikhaylovski, and so Aleko Konstantinov, although he was not so serious a thinker as Mikhaylovski, yet holds a more important place in Bulgarian literature and his

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One may therefore summarize by saying that there has been virtually no religious struggle in Bulgaria, even though the victims are not few in number. This does not mean that all has been tranquil and serene. Georgi Dimitrov was not a man to give that sort of content to the word "peace." Nowhere have the Russians shown greater ruthlessness in carrying out the policies to which Leninism-Stalinism is committed. Marxist theorists consider the independent farmer as the greatest obstacle to social progress. They think it inevitable that industry should spawn the proletarian worker, and hold this worker to be at one and the same time a carrier of the Marxist virus and a member of the class majority in whose hands collective power over productive properties collectively owned and managed properly belongs. Accordingly there is only one way in which to speed arrival at the Communist goal, defined by Marx in the first volume of *Das Kapital*. The agricultural operation must be collectivized, so that eventually all tillers of the soil will cease to be owners of property and will work instead for the State. On this belief has been based the otherwise curious and paradoxical procedure of the Communists in Eastern Europe. In countries containing large estates, the Land Reform method is used to break them up and to parcel out small holdings; but as soon as this has been done the process is reversed, and the peasant owners are squeezed until they can only surrender their land for the organization of a "cooperative."

Therefore Bulgaria was almost made to order for Communist experimentation. Nearly four-fifths of the population earned a living by the soil; and, though after the First World

and now the number of Mohammedans expelled is in excess of 150,000. Moslem religious activities are, as a matter of course, subject to the existing laws concerning religion. Turkey has therewith been faced with a grave problem of refugee resettlement, and reliable reports indicate that she has dealt with it skillfully. Refugees are receiving farm lands in Anatolia, which has been sparsely populated. Naturally there need be no fear of Communist infiltration.

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185 War a program of cooperative farming was inaugurated on a
● 829 voluntary membership basis, the vast majority of farmers were small landowners of the type which once was so characteristic of the Ukraine. As early as August, 1945, the first of a series of decrees was promulgated, to liquidate the hated kulak and incorporate him into the kolkhoz, or State farm, system. At the same time a blueprint of industrialization was drawn, on the
[466] basis of the familiar Two- and Five-Year Plans. The blueprint required first of all cheap compulsory labor in quantity. The published legislation outlines the methods by which that labor force was to be obtained. The police received authority "to commit to communities for educational labor, or to a new place of residence, persons guilty of fascist or antidemocratic manifestations." It was also decreed, soon after the seizure of power, that many hundreds of thousands of persons should be "sent to the factories or shifted to industry." On none of these matters was any effort made to maintain secrecy.

[371] Soon dams and electric power plants were being constructed
697 in various parts of the country. The exploitation of Bulgaria's
466 very modest coal deposits was greatly intensified. In order to supply the needed labor force, concentration camps were erected in a surprising variety of places. One of the better known is that at Belene, the inmates of which work at digging canals. Here are cooped up many prominent Bulgarian intellectuals, businessmen, and officers of divers political organizations once opposed to Communism. The Communists themselves have advertised widely this camp, where, it is estimated, 9,000 persons are interned under the most primitive penal conditions. If the accounts of prisoners who have escaped from it are to be credited (and there is no reason why they should not be), it is in all truth an infamous place. The methods of committing people to it have been spelled out in carefully devised legislation, which makes no provision for haling anyone before